

Delaware Forest Service awards volunteer fire grants



From left, Smokey Bear joined Greenwood Fire Company chief Mark Anderson and firefighter Justin Minton as they received a check for \$1504 from the Delaware Forest Service's assistant state forester Kyle Hoyd, who oversees the Volunteer Fire Assistance Grant Program. The matching grant will improve Greenwood's readiness to respond to wildfires.

The Delaware Forest Service (DFS) has awarded \$22,000 in grants to eight volunteer fire companies to purchase equipment to fight wildfires and improve their wildfire readiness and capabilities. In the past 10 years, the DFS has provided 122 grants totaling more than \$288,000 to many of Delaware's 60 volunteer fire companies through its Volunteer Fire Assistance Grant Program, funded by the U.S. Forest Service.

<u>Volunteer Fire Company</u>	<u>Award</u>	<u>Match</u>
Aetna Hose, Hook, & Ladder Co. #7, 8, 9, 10	\$3,452.25	\$4,500.00
Felton Community Fire Co. #48	\$2,250.00	\$2,259.00
Leipsic Volunteer Fire Co. #53	\$1,938.00	\$3,876.00
Volunteer Hose Co. #27	\$4,500.00	\$4,500.00
Talleyville Volunteer Fire Co. #25	\$3,747.50	\$7,495.00
Greenwood Fire Company #78	\$1,504.14	\$3,008.27
Laurel Fire Department #81	\$1,628.00	\$4,778.00
Mill Creek Fire Co. #2, 21	\$2,980.11	\$5,031.96
Total	\$22,000.00	\$35,448.23



Smokey Bear joined Leipsic Volunteer Fire Company's chief Mike Greco as he accepted a \$1938 grant from the Delaware

Forest Service's Kyle Hoyd, who administers the agency's wildland fire program. The check is part of a matching grant program to help volunteer fire companies purchase tools and equipment to fight wildfires in their communities.

The matching grant program also represents a cost-effective use of limited federal funds. While applicants must offer a minimum of 50 percent in cost-share match for its request, many provide much more, which resulted in every federal dollar being matched with \$1.61 in spending from the recipient. The grants help underwrite the cost of useful items and equipment to help volunteer firefighters meet the unexpected and often unpredictable threat of wildfires in fields, forests, open spaces, and marshes. Funds can be used to purchase items such as Nomex – the lightweight fire-resistant clothing used by wildland firefighters – or necessary equipment such as two-way radios, hoses, drip torches, flashlights, pumps, hoses, gloves, boots or chainsaws.

The 60 volunteer fire companies in the First State are extremely vital to the mission of the Delaware Forest Service as they provide much of the manpower and equipment to fight wildfires in the state. In fact, many members of Delaware's wildland fire crew who help battle blazes in the western United States are drawn from the ranks of local volunteer fire companies.

In the past fiscal year, the Delaware Forest Service assisted 43 of Delaware's 60 volunteer fire companies (72%) either through wildfire suppression, loaning of equipment, or training. In addition to the fire assistance grants, the Delaware Forest Service also provides funding to help provide basic wildland firefighting courses for volunteer firefighters. This year, \$12,000 was spent in association with the Delaware State Fire School to help offset the costs of basic training courses for a total of 138 wildland

firefighters.